A Pan-African Encyclopedia

Book 1

Edited by Zekeh S. Gbotokuma

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DEDICATION

To the very first Africans whom I have known from the early days of my life, i.e., my parents: Lucie Yenda and E. Sua as well as my brothers and sisters, living and defunct.

To all 'African-Black-Colored-Negro' men and women who - through their courage, determination, love, genius, wisdom, nationalism, pan-Africanism, and under difficult historical circumstances - have lived, thought, spoken, sung and danced, written, played, fought, marched, or acted in other ways, and died so that justice, peace, freedom, equality, respect, dignity, pursuit of happiness, and human rights can be enjoyed by all human beings regardless of such facticities as race, gender, class, nationality, etc. These men and women are true heroes and 'sheroes' of the pan-African world, makers of the second millennium, superstars of the Africana experience and history, and the bright lights that illuminate and enlighten the African and African Diaspora's darknesses.

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PREFACE

In 1989, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin edited a book entitled, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. This encyclopedia, conceived by a young scholar, goes in the same sense focusing [on] cultural, economic, intellectual, political, religious, and social changes in Africa and the African diaspora.

All of the entries can be reduced to classical greed [creed?]. They fit in what Marxists used to distinguish on the one hand, an infrastructure regulated by a dialectic between processes of production and social relations of production. This "*Infrastruktur*" - to use Karl Marx's word, which is more telling than our English 'infrastructure' - was conceived as determining the other spaces: the political, the ideological, and the intellectual.

We do remember that the political is exercised in the tension between the organization of production, which is another name for the organization of power and on the other hand the political discourse. In the intellectual and ideological space, we have on the one hand a configuration, and on the other hand, speculative or discursive practices against Marx's dogmatism. Thanks to intellectuals like Louis Althusser, we have learned a lot about the terminations and over-determinations in both the "*Unterbau*" and superstructures. This encyclopedia in its ambition will write the post-colonial saga in the African world with its strengths and weaknesses.

In this encyclopedia we can see concretely the relationship between localities, intellectual spaces, and individualities, and thus recognize that the empire is writing back in its own contradictions.

V.Y. Mudimbe
Duke University and Stanford University

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PART TWO:
THE B-WORDS AND LOCUTIONS

> If we are to understand the meanings of "blackness" in the African diaspora and elsewhere, we must sharpen our critical perspectives on cherished paradigms that were forged over the past five centuries on the anvil of Euro-American racism and the fires of black liberation.
> (Norman Witten, "Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean)

BANTU

Plural noun (1862). 1: A group of African languages spoken generally south of a line from Cameroon to Kenya. 2. A family of Negroid peoples who occupy equatorial and southern Africa; a member of any of these peoples.[459]

Bantu Languages

A group of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language family. The Bantu languages are spoken in a very large area, including most of Africa from the fifth parallel of north latitude (roughly, below the bulge into the Atlantic) to Cape Province in the Republic of South Africa, the southernmost tip. Four of the major Niger-Congo languages ([Kinya]Rwanda, Makua, Xhosa, and Zulu) are Bantu languages. Swahili (q.v.) is a Bantu lingua franca important both in commerce and in literature.

Bantu nouns usually consist of a stem preceded by a prefix that changes according to number. Nouns are grouped into categories (genders) on the basis of these prefixes. All or almost all the words in a Bantu sentence are usually marked by a prefix indicating the category to which the noun used as subject of the sentence

[459] See *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.*

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